



*United States Attorney
Southern District of New York*

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**FORMER FARC GUERRILLA SENTENCED IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL
COURT TO 15 YEARS IN PRISON FOR PROVIDING MATERIAL
SUPPORT TO A FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATION**

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that YARLEI BAÑOL-RAMOS, a former guerilla for the 57th Front of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (the "FARC"), was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge WILLIAM H. PAULEY III to 15 years in prison for conspiring to provide material support to a foreign terrorist organization. She was arrested in February 2008 with co-conspirator JORGE ABEL IBARGUEN-PALACIO and others following a firefight with the Panamanian National Police ("PNP") on vessels off the coast of Panama. BAÑOL-RAMOS pled guilty on February 28, 2011.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "The events leading up to her capture paint a very clear picture of the lengths Yarlei Banol-Ramos was willing to go to in the name of the FARC. Her successful prosecution underscores this Office's commitment to bringing members of this dangerous terrorist organization to justice."

According to the Indictment to which BAÑOL-RAMOS pled guilty, the criminal Complaint previously filed in the case, related Indictments of other FARC guerillas whose cases are pending in the Southern District of New York, and statements made during the guilty plea proceeding:

The FARC is a terrorist group dedicated to the violent overthrow of Colombia's democratically-elected government. It consists of a highly structured criminal organization, styled as a military group with "blocs," "fronts," and "militias," as well as governing bodies known as the "Secretariat" and the "Estado Mayor." The 57th Front of the FARC is located in the Choco Department of Colombia, which borders the Republic of Panama. The 57th Front is involved in cocaine trafficking, and in obtaining supplies such as weapons, ammunition, uniforms, and other items for itself and other FARC fronts. The 57th Front also funds itself by kidnapping for ransom. BAÑOL-RAMOS was a

member of the 57th Front and agreed to work to further the FARC's terrorist activities.

On the morning of February 22, 2008, the PNP approached a boat off the coast of Jaqué, Panama, that appeared to need assistance. BAÑOL-RAMOS, IBARGUEN-PALACIO and others were on deck dressed in civilian clothing. While the Panamanian police officers were towing the boat to shore, BAÑOL-RAMOS and other FARC members pointed weapons at the police. Other police boats arrived to render assistance and rescue the officers who were being held captive. After an exchange of gunfire, which wounded at least one officer, BAÑOL-RAMOS and her co-conspirators were arrested and taken into custody by the Panamanian police.

An inventory of the boat revealed that it contained four fully loaded AK-47 automatic weapons and one Galil rifle, over 900 rounds of live ammunition, military equipment, communication equipment, FARC uniforms, FARC encampment equipment, and explosives and detonators. The presence of cocaine was also detected in various sections of the boat.

In April 2008, the 57th Front kidnapped an American citizen living in Panama and held him hostage for over ten months until a ransom was paid.

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In addition to the prison term, Judge PAULEY sentenced BAÑOL-RAMOS to of supervised release.

At the sentencing, Judge PAULEY said that BAÑOL-RAMOS was a "very dangerous person who fully deserved the maximum sentence that the law permits."

IBARGUEN-PALACIO also pled guilty in February 2011 and is scheduled to be sentenced on October 3, 2011, at 5:00 p.m.

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of the DEA's New York Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Strike Force and the DEA's Panama Country Office. He also thanked the Fronteriza Policia, part of the Panamanian National Police, for their efforts and assistance.

This case is being handled by the Office's Terrorism and International Narcotics Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys JEFFREY A. BROWN and REBECCA M. RICIGLIANO are in charge of the prosecution.

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